

Civic Engagement

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Utah State Office of Education
Life Skills, Academic Service Learning



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Academic Service Learning Grants

Over \$100,000 is now available to schools and districts for the 2006-2007 school year through Academic Service Learning Grants. These grants range in amount from \$250 - \$15000 and can be applied for by any public or charter school or district in the state.

Applications are now on line on the web page at <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/servicelearning/index.htm>. Grants for the first round of applications are due **September 8th**. Awards are intended as seed money to allow districts and schools opportunities to develop meaningful service learning programs.

Academic Service Learning is curriculum-related service to others. It is more than community service. It is sparked by understanding the objectives and content of a curriculum, and ignited by the desire to become civically involved by rendering meaningful service that demonstrates mastery of those objectives. In addition to mastery of curricular objectives, academic service learning creates opportunities to acquire a disposition for volunteerism, a necessary ingredient in democracy.

In its ideal form, Academic Service Learning addresses a community need that is directly related to in-class curriculum. It provides a structure for civic engagement through which students may design and implement a solution to the problem. It involves the following steps:

1. Clearly defining a need or issue that relates to core objectives for a curriculum
2. Forming community partnerships
3. Gathering research, and examining alternative solutions to the problem
4. Selecting or designing the most appropriate solution
5. Developing an action plan, including acquiring necessary funding and resources
6. Performing the service to solve the problem
7. Reflecting and evaluating the effectiveness of the service rendered
8. Celebrating the achievement of project objectives

The motivation for Academic Service Learning is rooted in the democratic notion of the common good. It is the realization that individuals possess the power to solve problems and better society through voluntary service. As students perform such service they will learn to focus on rewards that go far beyond any grade for coursework in a classroom, and become engaged citizens in a democracy with a determination to improve the world in which they live.

The Utah State Board of Education supports this definition through a resolution that is posted at <http://www.schools.utah.gov/curr/servicelearning/USBESL%20resolution.pdf>

Service is the rent we pay to be living. It is the very purpose of life and not something you do in your spare time. - Marian Wright Edelman

Legislators Go Back to School to Listen, Learn, and Teach!

"Your ideas count!" That theme echoes year-round throughout Utah's schools as legislators interact with classroom students.

America's Legislators Back to School is a year-round civic education program that encourages schools to collaborate with legislators and provide hands-on activities for students to enhance existing school curricula. Utah is ranked top-of-the-nation in legislator participation, and Utah legislators look forward to being invited into classrooms again this 2006-2007 school year.

NCSL (National Conference of State Legislatures) partners with CCE (Center for Civic Education) in the America's Legislators Back to School and Project Citizen programs. NCSL has designated a kick-off week at the beginning of each school year to emphasize the value of America's Legislators Back to School Program. NCSL and CCE also encourage involvement between Project Citizen participants and public officials.

Principals and teachers are encouraged to invite legislators into classrooms year-round to teach students to value public service and become involved in the political process. The processes, pressures, debate, negotiation, and compromise- the very fabric of representative democracy- are brought to life when students interact with legislators in mock sessions, simulated hearings, bill drafting, or formulating budgets.

Access details about Utah's Legislators Back to School Program at <http://le.utah.gov/lrgc/backtoschool.htm> where you will find useful lesson plans, concurrent resolutions that support the program, and much more. If you have questions, you can reach the program's coordinator, Shelley Day, at 801-538-1032 or shelleyday@utah.gov.



Dialog on Democracy targets role of media.

The Dialog on Democracy is an annual event put on by members of the Utah Coalition for Character, Civic and Service Learning to inspire teachers to help students acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for engaged citizenship. This year, the conference will feature Dr. Larry Sabato, a noted critic of campaign finance and the role of the media. Dr. Sabato will keynote the dinner scheduled at Rice-Eccles Stadium on the night of November 14th. A noted political analyst, Dr. Sabato will discuss effective prediction of election outcomes.

The Washington Post called Dr. Sabato "the Mark McGwire of political analysts" and he is dubbed by Fox News Channel as "America's favorite political scientist." More recently, the *Washingtonian* magazine has called him the "Dr. Phil of American politics." As founder and director of the University of Virginia's Center for Politics, Dr. Sabato bridges the gap between the ivory tower and the real world on issues of critical importance to American democracy and the challenges facing our political process.

In addition to the dinner address, Dr. Sabato is scheduled to do uplinks to national news networks as he offers analysis of the recently completed election. He will also offer instruction and dialog with teachers in additional sessions at the conference.

The Hinckley Institute of Politics at the University of Utah is this year's official organizer of the event. The State Office of Education has reserved funding to sponsor a limited number of teachers to attend the event. Inquiries may be directed to Alan Griffin (alan.griffin@schools.utah.gov 801-538-7761).

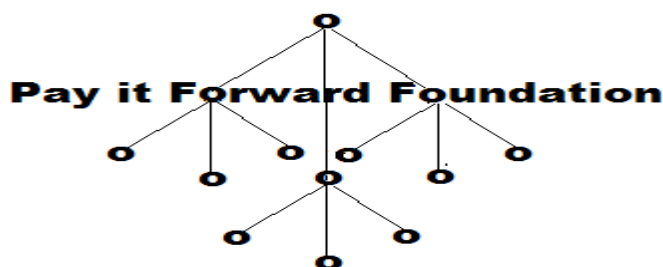
Constitution Week Events

Constitution Day will be celebrated in the schools on Monday, September 18. Schools are reminded that any school receiving federal funding is mandated to teach something about the constitution on that day. At noon, students all over the country will simultaneously recite the Preamble of the Constitution. This event will be led by local leaders in courthouses across the country, and by General Colin Powell by online video. There are several links posted on the site at <http://www.schools.utah.gov/curr/civics/index.htm> on the right side of the page under the "Constitution Day" pull down menu. One of them references Constitutionday.com which has the video featuring General Powell (<http://www.constitutionday.com/videos/videos.html>).

Nancy Volmer from the District Courts (nancyv@email.utcourts.gov 801-578-3994), is also coordinating visits from judges to the classroom during that week, and many state legislators will be visiting the schools as well (contact Shelley Day shelleyday@utah.gov 801-538-1032).

Multiplication in Academic Service Learning

The movie "Pay It Forward" tells a story of a young man name Trevor McKinney who takes an assignment in his social studies class to do something that will make a difference in the world. He devises a plan to perform significant acts of service for 3 other people, and then ask them not to return the service, but to "pay it forward" to 3 others they know and encourage them to do the same. The Pay it Forward Foundation (<http://www.payitforwardfoundation.org/home.html>), shows an illustration of the way the project would work:



The program suggests a kind of reverse multi-level marketing that, if taken seriously, can produce a vast network of service. It brings to mind the familiar scenario we all have been caught in when someone unexpectedly gives us a gift – we suddenly have a passion to return the favor and give something back. This desire works so hard in some that they absolutely will not rest until they have reciprocated.

A primary goal of Academic Service Learning is to develop dispositions among students for responsibility and the common good. This service is fundamental in teaching the elements of good character. House bill 22, widely known as the Character Education Bill, was proposed by Representative LaVar Christensen in 2004. It was subsequently passed, and states that

"the happiness and security of American society relies upon the public virtue of its citizens which requires a united commitment to a moral social order where self-interests are willingly subordinated to the greater common good."

Academic Service Learning is an ideal vehicle to use to accomplish this lofty goal. The state school board supports it by resolution. May we take full advantage of this profound opportunity to influence our students to make positive changes in the world. How much we need the multiplication effect of "Pay it Forward" as we prepare tomorrow's citizens!

--Alan Griffin

More Grant Opportunities

[State Farm®](#) and [Youth Service America](#) (YSA) know that students, teachers and schools can use service-learning as a tool to help youth build stronger academic skills, foster civic responsibility and develop leadership abilities. Service-learning is a teaching method that combines meaningful service and curriculum or program-based learning. Join millions of young people across the globe who are impacting their communities through service-learning. Youth Service America and the State Farm Companies Foundation are offering the State Farm Good Neighbor Service-Learning Grant for youth across the United States. These grants of up to \$1,000 support youth (ages 5-25), teachers, or school-based service-learning coordinators in implementing service-learning projects for [National and Global Youth Service Day](#), April 20-22, 2007. To learn more, download an application and grant guidelines at www.YSA.org/awards or email GoodNeighbor@ysa.org. Projects can address any number of themes including the environment, disaster relief, health, teen issues, education, interfaith dialogue, intergenerational relationships, homelessness, and literacy, amongst others. **Postmark deadline: Monday, October 16.**



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Character & Civics Education
Events Calendar:
[http://www.schools.utah.gov/online/webcalendar.pl?Op=ShowIt&CalendarName=Character and Civics Education](http://www.schools.utah.gov/online/webcalendar.pl?Op=ShowIt&CalendarName=Character_and_Civics_Education)

Red, White, and Green Climate Change Grant

Youth Service America and the Civil Society Institute are excited to announce the Red, White, and Green Climate Change Grant. This opportunity offers \$500 to youth between the ages of 15-25 or to organizations that serve engage youth ages 15-25. Successful applicants will design a service-learning project that promotes awareness about climate change and possible solutions.

The Red, White, and Green Climate Change Grant is open to all young people in the United States between the ages of 15-25 and to organizations that serve youth ages 15-25.

Applicants will be expected to develop and implement a service project about climate change that engages their community and candidates running for election in November 2006. We welcome projects where youth work in partnership with adults (parents, coaches, teachers, youth leaders, etc.), but remember this is an opportunity for youth to shine. Projects should be youth-led, and the service must take place between **October 1 and November 30, 2006**.

Completed applications must be postmarked no later than Thursday, **September 1, 2006**. Application materials are available online at www.YSA.org. Please download and review both the application and application guidelines. Email redwhiteandgreen@ysa.org if you have questions after reviewing the materials.

Great Resources

Some Great Reference Sites:

Core Documents of U.S. Democracy
<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/coredocs.html>

Library Spot
<http://www.libraryspot.com/>

Our Time Lines –
http://www.ourtimelines.com/create_tl_2c.html

Refdesk
<http://www.refdesk.com/>

Utah Demographics
<http://www.utah.gov/about/demographics.html>

U.S. Census Bureau Fact Finder
http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en

USOE Websites:

Character Ed – http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/char_ed/default.htm

Civics – <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/civics/index.htm>

Service Learning – <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/servicelearning/index.htm>

Life Skills - <http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/civics/lifeskills/index.htm>